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## *PD/GWSS Board Holds 2005/2006 PD Assessment at \$2.00 a Thousand*

**Sacramento, CA, — June 30, 2005** – To enable continuing research efforts aimed at controlling the spread of Pierce's disease (PD) and the Glassy-winged sharpshooter (GWSS), and ultimately finding a solution to one of the wine industry's biggest threats, California Department of Food and Agriculture Secretary A.G. Kawamura today approved the recommendation by the PD/GWSS Board to maintain the grower assessment at \$2.00 per thousand dollars of value for winegrape sales.

"After a close examination of the Board's commitments and needs, the Board members agreed that maintaining the present funding level would allow us to responsibly fund critical research, while also protecting against any emergencies that might arise," said Board Chair Brad Lange.

The assessment is expected to raise approximately \$4 million on a projected wine grape value of \$2 billion. That amount, when combined with federal and state funding, provides approximately \$31 million annually to control the spread of the GWSS, which is a highly effective vector of Pierce's Disease, which is fatal to vineyards.

The grower assessment funds are primarily used to pay for all PD research efforts with more than \$17 million having been spent to date funding over 100 research projects, ranging from finding predatory wasps to combat the GWSS to how PD is transmitted by the GWSS.

A referendum of winegrape growers on whether or not to extend the assessment for another five years is currently in progress, with July 14<sup>th</sup> set as the last day to mail ballots. If the referendum were to fail, this would be the last year for the assessment with remaining funds being allocated for research during 2006.

The PD/GWSS Board was established by Assembly Bill 1394 in July 2001 to develop recommendations on the use of funds collected from winegrape growers to sustain research and other program activities. Pierce's Disease has no known cure, and left unchecked, it could be devastating to the grape industry and several other California crops. A study recently released by the Wine Institute and the California Association of Winegrape Growers showed that the total annual economic impact of California's winegrape industry is estimated at \$45.4 billion.